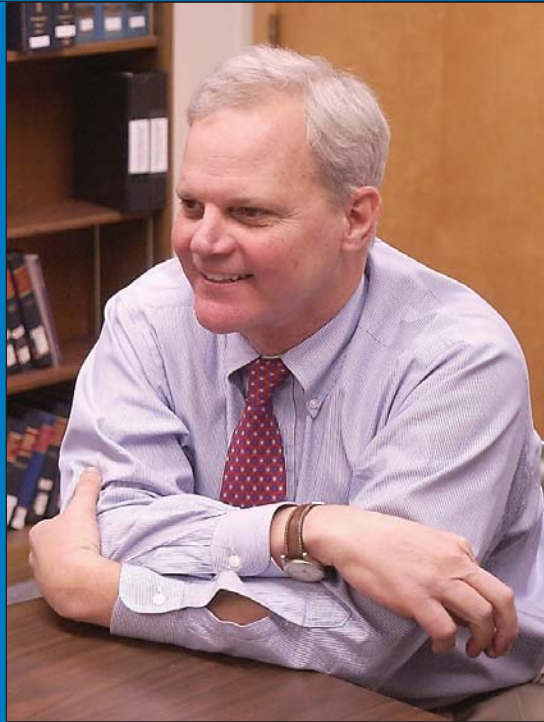


Dieter Named Ambassador To Belize

Former LSC Board Member Robert J. Dieter was sworn in as U.S. Ambassador to Belize on July 25th. At a State Department ceremony presided over by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Dieter's two years of service as Chairman of the Board's Finance Committee came to an end. "It's a real honor to have the opportunity to represent the President and the American people, and I'm going to try and do my best," Dieter says. "It's quite a change from being a law professor," which he has been for nearly thirty years, overseeing a legal aid clinic at the University of Colorado.

Belize boasts hundreds of miles of coastline on the Caribbean Sea, wild jungles, and Mayan ruins that attract archeologists from all over the world. His new job responsibilities include ensuring the safety of embassy personnel, Americans living in the host country, and the literally hundreds of thousands of American tourists that come to the country each year. He will also have to maintain good relationships with such diverse groups as the Peace Corps, the Smithsonian Institution and the Drug Enforcement Agency. Still, Dieter relishes the chance to make a difference. "An ambassador can make the job as challenging as he wants. There is an opportunity to do something of value and significance in Belize, and hopefully when I get a better lay of the land I'll be able to pick out some things where I can make a contribution." Although he is eager to begin the next chapter in his life, Dieter will not soon forget his colleagues on



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the LSC Board. "I very much enjoyed my time on the Board, and meeting other members from around the country with different backgrounds. I hope some of them will find time to come down and visit, but if ten percent of the people who have indicated they're coming actually show up, we'll be overwhelmed!"

Texas Certification for Domestic Violence Victims

Domestic violence is a pervasive, pernicious, and multi-faceted problem in the state of Texas. According to the Texas Health and Human Services Division, there were over 185,000 reported cases of abuse in 2003, resulting in the deaths of over 150 women. The legion of barriers women face when trying to gain independence from their abusers simply perpetuates the problem. The Texas Public Utility Commission recently took steps to eliminate one of those barriers, authorizing legal services organizations that receive funds from the Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation (TEAJF) to certify victims of domestic violence. Once certified, victims are exempt



from the deposits usually required for electricity and phone service. The new policy was championed by the Texas Legal Services Center, which provides training, litigation support and other services for legal aid advocates. Randy Chapman, Executive Director of the Center said,

"Victims of abuse should not be chained to their abuser because high utility deposits prevent them from setting up their own homes." The new policy means "that when women meet with legal aid attorneys for protective orders, those

same attorneys can also provide practical help in securing affordable shelter." The TEAJF dis-



Randy Chapman, Executive Director,
Texas Legal Services Center.

tributes more than \$11 million per year to the 38 legal aid organizations across the state who close more than 11,000 domestic violence cases a year. This new policy will allow them to do even more for their clients. Betty Balli Torres, the Foundation's Executive Director said, "A

victim of domestic violence needs a whole range of services when attempting to extricate her family from an abusive situation. With a legal aid office's certification, you have one less problem to deal with when you are facing an already overwhelming situation."